



## President Bruce Benson's newsletter [1]

### A Message from the President

#### August 2017



Pathways2Teaching founder Margarita Bianco

The teacher shortage in the United States is a growing topic of discussion in communities, state education departments, school boards and media reports. "Crisis" is the word most often used to describe the situation. In Colorado, some estimates note that about 3,000 more teachers are needed, and the problem is particularly acute in rural and urban districts.

CU's Colleges of Education on our campuses in Boulder, Colorado Springs and Denver are deeply engaged in the issue. The deans responsible for the programs are collaborating on solutions. I recently took CU Boulder [6] College of Education dean Kathy Schultz to The Daniels Fund, one of our strong supporters and partners, to share information and determine ways we can make a dent in the shortage, particularly in rural schools.

[More on the Pathways2Teaching story](#) [2]

• [P2T website](#) [3]

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The problem can be daunting, but I am encouraged by some of our efforts, particularly one led by one of our top faculty members. Dr. Margarita Bianco, who earned CU's Timmehaus Teaching Ambassador Award this year, leads the Pathways2Teaching [7] program, which attracts high school students from low-income and rural districts to teaching. Now in its eighth year, it has engaged nearly 450 students from six school districts in Colorado, including Denver Public Schools. Bianco is an associate professor in the School of Education and Human Development at [CU Denver](#) [8].

Bianco's innovative "grow your own" program not only addresses the shortage of teachers, but also the significant lack of teacher diversity. Its motto, "You can't be who you can't see," emerged from her own experience growing up in New York City, where she rarely saw a

teacher who was an ethnic minority.

Pathways2Teaching allows high school juniors and seniors to get an inside look at the profession and earn college credit along the way. They learn about the teaching profession and some of the issues particular to low-income and rural schools, especially how social inequities affect the teaching workforce. It can sometimes be a tough sell, enticing students to make a career in the kinds of schools many are trying to escape.

Yet Bianco makes good use of her undergraduate and graduate students at CU Denver to provide the very thing needed by many of the students the program serves -- mentors and role models. In turn, the high school students in the program work with middle school and elementary school students to get a better sense of issues and to serve as role models themselves. The program also works with local communities, where people best understand their unique challenges and issues, engaging them as a resource to build the teacher workforce.

Bianco exemplifies the spirit of CU's Timmerhaus Teaching Ambassador Award. In addition to her work with Pathways2Teaching, she will spend the next two years sharing her experiences with faculty at CU and around the country [5], as well as with K-12 teachers and school districts. She spent time this summer working with schools in Nashville on a version of Pathways2Teaching. We were happy to feature her in our new podcast series [7], CU on the Air [9], and I would encourage you to listen to Bianco describe her work in her own words.

The teacher shortage won't be solved by any big-bang initiatives, but by local efforts such as Pathways2Teaching. School districts growing their own teacher workforce is a great way to chip away at the shortage, and it has the added bonus of fostering a teacher workforce that understands issues in the kinds of schools they went through. CU is committed to doing its part to address this critical issue facing our communities, state and country, and we're proud to have people such as Margarita Bianco on the front lines.

For feedback, contact [officeofthepresident@cu.edu](mailto:officeofthepresident@cu.edu) [10]

Sincerely,



Bruce Benson  
President

**To receive President Benson's monthly newsletter, email us at [contact@cu.edu](mailto:contact@cu.edu)** [11].

## 2017

- [August](#) [12], Pathways to address the teacher shortage
- [June](#) [13], Building on a proud history
- [May](#) [14], My favorite time of year
- [April](#) [15], Mapping MOOCs
- [March](#) [16], Innovation sparks creation
- [February](#) [17], Advocating for CU
- [January](#) [18], State funding quest

## 2016

- [November](#) [19], Performance plus medicine
- [October](#) [20], A collection of records
- [September](#) [21], Sustaining CU
- [August](#) [22], A snapshot of you
- [June](#) [23], The administrative myth
- [May](#) [24], Seeking insight
- [April](#) [25], Connecting health
- [March](#) [26], Free speech forum
- [February](#) [27], History and humanities

## 2015

- [December](#) [28], Enriching diversity
- [November](#) [29], Veterans: Impact and opportunity
- [October](#) [30], Tackling mental health
- [September](#) [31], Marketing a great university
- [August](#) [32], Coming of Age
- [June](#) [33], Sunny futures
- [May](#) [34], Vision to see the future
- [April](#) [35], Momentum in Denver
- [March](#) [36], Public higher education's changing face
- [February](#) [37], Health and medicine: modest beginnings, lofty aspirations

## 2014

- [November](#) [38], Leadership lessons
- [October](#) [39], Learning how to learn
- [September](#) [40], CU's largest real estate gift
- [August](#) [41], What for, not how much
- [July](#) [42], The bogeyman in the basement
- [May](#) [43], Private gain or public good?
- [April](#) [44], Funding outlook: sunny today, stormy tomorrow
- [March](#) [45], Expertise and passion
- [February](#) [46], Soaring in southern Colorado
- [January](#) [47], It all starts with reputation

## 2013

- [November](#) [48], To Mars and Beyond
- [October](#) [49], Medicine gets personal
- [August](#), [50] CU For Colorado
- [June](#), [51] MOOCs, blended classrooms and clickers
- [May](#), [52] Why we're here
- [March](#) [53], Five energizing years
- [February](#), [54] Groundbreaking Alzheimer's research
- [January](#) [55], The window into CU

## 2012

- [December](#) [56], The threat from legal pot
- [November](#) [57], Good news comes in threes
- [October](#) [58], CU labs: a magnificent microcosm
- [September](#) [59], Is college worth it?
- [August](#) [60], A lasting legacy and a record set
- [July](#) [61], Getting there from here
- [June](#) [62], Serving those who served
- [May](#) [63], Indelible impact
- [April](#) [64], Bruce on Bruce
- [March](#) [65], Perception and reality
- [February](#), [66]Leading leaders

## 2011

- [December](#) [67], We're most proud of this CU uniform
- [November](#) [68], From python hearts to Tebow's cleats
- [October](#) [69], We want you
- [September](#) [70], How to succeed at college and save \$20,000
- [August](#) [71], Reputation drives results
- [July](#) [72], Teaching an old president new tricks
- [June](#) [73], A message from the president
- [April](#) [74], CU announces \$1.5 billion Creating Futures campaign
- [February](#) [75]

## 2010

- [December](#) [76]
- [October](#) [77]
- [August](#) [78]
- [June](#) [79]
- [April](#) [80]
- [February](#) [81]

## 2009

- [December](#) [82]
- [October](#) [83]
- [August](#) [84]
- [June](#) [85]
- [April](#) [86]
- [February](#) [87]

## 2008

- [December](#) [88]
- [October](#) [89]
- [September](#) [90]

## Groups audience:

Office of the President

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[5]

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[6]

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[13] <http://www.cu.edu/doc/june-2017-newsletterpdf>

[14] <http://www.cu.edu/doc/may-2017-newsletterpdf>

[15] <http://www.cu.edu/doc/mapping-moocs-april-2017pdf>

[16] <http://www.cu.edu/doc/presidents-newsletter-march-2017-pdf>

[17] <http://www.cu.edu/doc/february-2017-advocating-cupdf>

[18] <http://www.cu.edu/doc/january-2017pdf>

[19] <http://www.cu.edu/doc/november-2016-bruce-e-newsletter.pdf>

[20] <http://www.cu.edu/doc/october-2016-bruce-newsletter.pdf>

[21] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2016/09/#.V9F2-vkrLIU>

[22] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2016/08/>

[23] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2016/06/>

[24] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2016/05/>

[25] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2016/04/>

[26] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2016/03/>

[27] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2016/02/>

[28] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2015/12/>

[29] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2015/11/>

[30] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2015/10/>

[31] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2015/09/>

[32] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2015/08/>

[33] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2015/06/>

[34] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2015/05/>

[35] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2015/04/>

[36] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2015/03/>

[37] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2015/02/>

[38] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2014/11/>

[39] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2014/10/>

[40] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2014/09/>

[41] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2014/08/>

[42] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2014/07/>

[43] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2014/05/>

[44] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2014/04/>  
[45] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2014/03/>  
[46] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2014/02/>  
[47] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2014/01/>  
[48] <http://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2013/11>  
[49] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2013/10/>  
[50] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2013/08/>  
[51] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2013/06/>  
[52] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2013/05/>  
[53] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2013/03/>  
[54] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2013/02/>  
[55] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2013/01/>  
[56] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2012/12/>  
[57] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2012/11/>  
[58] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2012/10/>  
[59] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2012/09/>  
[60] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2012/08/>  
[61] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2012/07/>  
[62] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2012/06/>  
[63] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2012/05/>  
[64] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2012/04/>  
[65] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2012/03/>  
[66] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2012/02/>  
[67] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2011/12/>  
[68] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2011/11/>  
[69] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2011/10/>  
[70] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2011/09/>  
[71] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2011/08/>  
[72] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2011/07/>  
[73] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2011/06/>  
[74] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2011/04/>  
[75] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2011/02/>  
[76] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2010/12/>  
[77] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2010/10/>  
[78] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2010/08/>  
[79] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2010/06/>  
[80] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2010/04/>  
[81] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2010/02/>  
[82] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2009/12/>  
[83] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2009/10/>  
[84] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2009/08/>  
[85] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2009/06/>  
[86] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2009/04/>  
[87] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2009/02/>  
[88] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2008/12/>  
[89] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2008/10/>  
[90] <https://www.cusys.edu/presnews/2008/August/>